

Message Text

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QUOTE

S E C R E T LONDON 00609

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PARM, NATO
SUBJECT: MBFR: AIR MANPOWER: EASTERN FREEZE

REF: (A) STATE 8358 (B) STATE 7762 (C) USNATO 131

1. SUMMARY. ON JAN 14 WE INFORMED FCO OFFICIALS OF U.S. INITIATIVE ON AIR MANPOWER AS INSTRUCTED BY REF (A). THEY WERE RECEPTIVE TO GENERAL IDEA BUT SUGGESTED THAT IDEA WOULD REQUIRE EXTENSIVE - AND LENGTHY - CONSIDERATION IN NATO. AFTER OUR PRESENTATION BRITISH RAISED EASTERN FREEZE PROPOSAL PROBLEM AND PRESSED FOR U.S. ACCEPTANCE THEIR FORMULA DESCRIBED REF (B). END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 14, WE MET WITH FCO WESTERN ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS MCLAREN, WOOD AND NIXON TO INFORM THEM OF U.S. PROPOSAL TO PRESENT AIR MANPOWER PACKAGE IN MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. WE GAVE THEM TEXT OF RELEVANT PORTIONS REF (A).

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3. INITIAL RESPONSE OF FCO OFFICIALS WAS THAT UK CONTINUES TO AGREE WITH CONCEPT OF INTRODUCTION AIR MANPOWER INTO NEGOTIATIONS. THEY FELT, HOWEVER, THAT COMPREHENSIVE NATURE OF PROPOSAL AND FACT THAT IT WOULD CONSTITUTE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN ALLIED POSITION WOULD MEAN THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE DETAILED -- AND THUS LENGTHY -- CONSIDERATION IN NATO. THIS PROBABLY WOULD RULE OUT "EARLY" INTRODUCTION.

4. MCLAREN'S FIRST SUBSTANTIVE REACTION WAS THAT QUESTION OF PRECEDENT FOR ALLIED AIR MANPOWER WOULD BE PROBLEM DESPITE U.S. ASSURANCES PARA 5 REF(A). HE FURTHER FELT THAT AGREED ALLIED EMPHASIS ON GROUND FORCES MIGHT BE WEAKENED BY U.S. PROPOSAL WITH SOME THREAT TO COMMON

CEILING CONCEPT ITSELF. BUT HE PROMISED THAT UK MBFR COMMUNITY WOULD LOOK AT THIS ASPECT WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

5. WOOD, WHO IS SENIOR FCO OFFICIAL WORKING EXCLUSIVELY ON MBFR, WAS TROUBLED THAT U.S. PROPOSAL PUTS REDUCTIONS IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGES. WHILE PRESENT ALLIED PROPOSAL WORKS OUT TO ABOUT 15 PERCENT U.S. AND SOVIET GROUND FORCES, ACTUAL NUMBER "15 PERCENT" HAS NOT BEEN USED. PRESENTATION OF PACKAGE IN THIS MANNER MIGHT ENCOURAGE EASTERN DEMAND FOR OVERALL EQUAL PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS (INCLUDING PHASE II) AND WOULD THUS WEAKEN COMMON CEILING IDEA.

6. EMBASSY COMMENT. WE BELIEVE THAT, UK WILL SUPPORT U.S. POSITION AFTER DETAILED CONSIDERATION WITHIN HMG. BUT WE CAN EXPECT THEM TO POSE MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT PROPOSAL AND TO SUGGEST PRESENTATIONAL CHANGES BEFORE FINAL ACCEPTANCE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE TWO MAJOR POINTS WHICH WILL CONCERN THEM WILL BE (A) THE MAINTENANCE OF COMMON GROUND FORCE CEILING AS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ALLIED

GOAL AND (B) A FORMULATION THAT WILL PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY FOR NON-U.S. ALLIES IN THE AIR MANPOWER SECTOR. END COMMENT.

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7. AFTER WE HAD FINISHED OUR PRESENTATION, MCLAREN RAISED QUESTION OF EASTERN FREEZE WITH US. HE NOTED THAT UK EMBASSY HAD MADE DEMARCHE TO ACDA REF (B) AND SAID FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS HAD BEEN SENT FOR EMBASSY TO HAVE SIMILAR DISCUSSIONS WITH STATE AND DOD. HMG IS MOST CONCERNED THAT USG WILL INSIST ON FLAT REJECTION OF FREEZE AND THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE POLITICALLY SOUND IN TERMS OF DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS OF ALLIES IF REJECTION RESULTS IN

EASTERN PUBLICITY ON FREEZE.

8. UK HAS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AGRUMENTS AGAINST ALLIED COUNTER-PROPOSAL AND AGREES THAT IT WOULD BE EASY FOR NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD ALLIED OBJECTIVE REDUCTIONS IN ADDITION TO CREATING MILITARY PROBLEM OF LIVING WITH FREEZE FOR WHAT WOULD PROBABLY BE INDEFINITE PERIOD. UK HAS THEREFORE MODIFIED ITS PROPOSAL SO THAT ALLIES WOULD OFFER A FREEZE TO BECOME EFFECTIVE WHEN AGREEMENT REACHED ON PHASE I. THIS WOULD MEAN ALMOST NO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN WHAT UK UNDERSTANDS TO BE U.S. POSITION BUT IT WOULD DRESS UP ALLIED POSITION TO MAKE DEFENSIBLE IN ALLIED PARLIAMENTS AND MEDIA.

9. MCLAREN SAID THAT IN JANUARY 10 MEETING ACDA OFFICER HAD INDICATED THAT STANDING U.S. POLICY IS TO REJECT FREEZE EXPLICITLY AND THAT THIS ITEM NOT CURRENTLY ON U. S. CALENDAR FOR RECONSIDERATION. HE HOPED NEW UK PROPOSAL WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY U.S. MBFR COMMUNITY.

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